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SUCCESS STORY

Afghan Fruits and Nuts Reach Export Markets

UK company places a second order for dried Afghan fruit and nuts after a successful pilot shipment.



Photo: USAID/ASAP

Cherries are among the many dried fruits from Afghanistan that are sparking appetite around the world.

“The UK is a great market for Afghan dried fruits and nuts. I hope that in the future we and other exporters will be able to send products to the UK and other European countries,” said Haji Sher Ali, President of Shir Ali Yaqoobzada Ltd.

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Afghanistan produces some of the world's tastiest fruits and nuts, and these high-value food products are in great demand in international markets. Buyers in Europe and Asia are looking to introduce quality Afghan agricultural products to their customers, and producers are eager to meet that demand. However, getting commodities to market presents a number of challenges, and USAID is assisting Afghan producers in the proper packaging and shipping of their goods.

Food safety standards are paramount. Products that are not properly packaged and shipped can ruin the country's competitive edge and taint its reputation as a reliable supplier of competitively priced quality food products. Additionally, arranging for overseas shipping and following customs regulations can be difficult for companies that are just beginning to export their products.

In early spring 2009, the Afghan company Shir Ali Yaqoobzada Ltd. struck a deal to export approximately 19 metric tons of mixed dried fruits and nuts valued at \$99,559 to Hakeemi and Turkistani Ltd. in London, United Kingdom.

Kabul's USAID-supported Agribusiness Brokerage Center linked the supplier with AFEX Logistic Solutions, a new freight forwarding company. The commodities were sorted and packaged in 200 and 450-gram plastic containers to meet the buyer's exact specifications.

On May 12, the first pilot shipment departed from Kabul and traveled over land and sea to arrive safely in the UK. The product was well received by the buyer and there were no quality claims or other complaints. In fact, the dried fruits and nuts were popular enough for the London-based buyer to place a second order.

President of Shir Ali Yaqoobzada Ltd. Haji Sher Ali has further plans to export containers of dried fruits and nuts to Turkey, expanding his business and bringing Afghan products to more international customers. “The UK is a great market for Afghan dried fruits and nuts. I hope that in the future we and other exporters will be able to send products to the UK and other European countries,” said Haji Sher Ali.